

ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Business Meeting
January 20, 2005
Minutes

Attendance:

Commissioners Bowers, Brown, Evans, Garcia, Porter, Powell and Thompson; Superintendent Dr. Rivera

President convened the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Act of Reverence led by Commissioner Thompson.

Commissioner Porter noted the lowering of the flag for the passing of two District employees.

Acceptance of Minutes:

Motion by Commissioner Brown to accept minutes of December 16, 2004 and January 3, 2005,

Seconded by Commissioner Garcia. Adopted 7-0 with Student Representative advisory vote of yes.

Speakers on an Agenda Item:

None

Superintendent's Report:

Dr. Rivera's report included: his attendance at Big 5 meeting with Commissioner Mills on January 18, 2005. He noted particularly the possible change from 55 to 65, and the position statement from the District requesting the safety net stay in place for a few more years until the urban districts are able to get the resources necessary to support higher achievement levels. Moving to annual testing grades 3 to 8, per NCLB, on which the District submitted a number of recommendations and will be participating in a conference call with SED. The District will host a forum with Jeffrey Canada on January 25th regarding the Harlem Children's Zone. The Community & Intergovernmental Relations committee will receive recommendations from SCAC as part of their report tonight. He noted the \$5 million Gates Foundation Grant; they have contracted with a retired principal to serve as the project director; every school identified in the grant will develop a site specific plan. State Comptroller's Audit is in the process of being completed right now. Hoping to receive a copy before February Recess. He noted that elementary schools have made gains in social studies, as the Board may have noted in the D&C, and the District will continue to focus on improving student achievement.

Committee Reports:

Student Representative Report, Samantha Sanchez, written report submitted. Mary Gilbert is on the agenda for March and will provide information on college application process, SAT preparation, etc.

Motion to accept monthly financial reports by Commissioner Powell, Seconded by Commissioner Garcia. Adopted 7-0 Advisory yes by Student representative.

Motion to accept Quarterly Student Activity Fund Report by Commissioner Powell, Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 7-0 Advisory yes by Student representative.

Finance Committee, Commissioner Powell, written report submitted.

Policy Committee, Commissioner Brown, no report. Noted the committee will meet on January 27, 2005.

Board Governance Committee, Commissioner Bowers, written report submitted. The committee will meet on January 24, 2005.

Quality Assurance Committee, Commissioner Thompson, written report submitted.

Commissioner Thompson noted that she is meeting with Commissioners Bowers and Brown regarding the scope and purview of the committee go forward, and how that fits in with the weighty agenda of the committee for the rest of the year.

Community and Intergovernmental Relations Committee, Commissioner Evans, written report submitted. He noted the opportunities he had to participate in a couple of MLK events this week. He asked the SCAC to come forward and make a presentation on their recommendations. Presenters included Charles Zettig, Steven Rebholz, and Mazi Bakari.

Commissioner Bowers posed the following questions:

What percentage of the committee participated at regularly (a 75% rate)? What rate did City Hall representatives participate and how influential were they?

There was approximately a 75% participation rate, feels those here tonight were the most influential, no undue influence by City representatives. There was strong debate, discussion and ultimately consensus around the report received.

Five criteria, each one is worth 20%, which is not a weight as every one is equal. Why not note that all equal rather than saying each worth 20%. True weight would have put one or two higher than others. Suggested that methodology is flawed.

Tried to be as fair as possible to every school. BOE facing serious issues. Criteria used is very fair. Felt more parents should have been at the table, though many are parents, yet they will have a say so in the future. Strict look at facilities rather than academics.

Tried to use objective method. Used 20% across the board to make it fair. Have number of options in your report that you can consider in your decision making.

Of all the criteria you didn't use, you didn't look at student performance. Why was it excluded?

That is a decision the Superintendent will make.

Of the schools on the list, they are closely associated with those parents that have been vocal against the school choice policy and that have the highest potential resale value.

Commissioner Brown commended them for objectivity in the face of such a highly political process.

Commissioner Evans posed the following question:

How did we arrive at the numbers for declining enrollment? Where did the number come from?

Number came from the county. At this time, have system built for 5500 more students than have in the system. Can project based upon birth rates, but there could be substantial changes in the population due to a number of different variables. They have provided the middle ground.

Commissioner Garcia commended the committee for the fantastic work performed for the Board's benefit. Understands this to be a summary of a much more comprehensive report, which he has seen at FMB meeting. This is the first step in a long process. Great job at establishing a base at which we can start this process.

Commissioner Porter thanked the committee for their time and effort. He posed the following question: Some people think committee disbanded once report is made. However, this committee is still intact and plans to go around to the community and answer questions until we get through the process? There has not been further discussion in how the SCAC will play its role at this point. Initial charge was to make recommendations to the Superintendent by designated date. Did not anticipate continuing unless there was an additional charge.

The SCAC has been scheduled into two additional meetings. The request has been made that it continue with the understanding and appreciation for people's time and the hours they have contributed.

Dr. Rivera noted there is an expectation that they will remain intact as the District moves through process of developing its long term capital improvement plan.

Board expressed consensus around that expectation. However, Commissioner Thompson noted that she has not had a clear understanding of when this committee's responsibility will end.

Jana Carlisle noted that there was a request by the committee members to continue. People will have the ability to discontinue if they choose because it is a much longer process than they signed on for. There may be some attrition and some other people join. It is an open process.

Commissioner Powell stated it was a well presented and defensible case.

Commissioner Powell asked about the origin of the number the decision is based on.

Jana Carlisle stated that the numbers regarding projected enrollment did come from Mr. Wheatcraft, and they are predicated upon the process that has been used by the District for years and served it well.

Commissioner Thompson posed the following questions:

Did you divide the five categories into subcategories and give them similar weights?

First task was to build a model for the five categories, identify what they are, etc.

Spent a great deal of time identifying the variables within the category and determining how each should be weighted. Didn't see complete compilation of results until very late in the process, to maintain integrity in the process. Mr. Zettig noted that regardless of the weighting used, the results came out essentially the same. As such, believed the easiest way to present to the community, and the fact that they could not come to consensus among the committee as to what should be rated more, they weighted all equally.

Commissioner Bowers noted that the weighting was subjective. There was no theory to the means for doing so; sought consensus among the committee and could not reach it. This makes it entirely subjective rather than quantitative analysis.

She asked how the place in the neighborhood was determined, including how involved parents, community and staff?

Looked at building use permits; partnerships with certain initiatives and community organizations; how open the school was to letting non-school related programs come into the school.

We did not have formal stream of people commenting on use and building importance. Looked at data but did not talk with faculty or community members.

The public input sessions were noted as time when the committee sought input on what criteria to use. They also considered the number of neighborhood children attending the school.

She noted that it was interesting that using this process School #36, which was proposed last year for closing, did not make the list.

Commissioner Thompson asked Ms. Jones to elaborate on her comments regarding more parent involvement.

Ms. Jones stated that it is the responsibility of the district to create many opportunities to get parents involved in all processes and every committee level throughout the district. Need to improve parental involvement across the board.

Student Representative Sanchez questioned the comment about neighborhood schools. The District identifies “neighborhood schools”. These boundaries were used to determine what students attended their “home” school.

Ms. Sanchez also asked whether the data that was used in terms of additional activities, how accurate is it? Are you in the schools getting data or getting it from other people.

The data is very close to correct. Hoped that information that came to them had integrity.

Commissioner Porter noted that the NE section of the City actually has a projected increase in birth rate. Was that taken into consideration when recommending schools in that zone?

This will be part of the next step in the process. Must understand the zone’s capacity in making decisions about possible closures. The enrollment projection method used here is used throughout the state.

Vice President’s report, Commissioner Garcia, no report.

President’s report, Commissioner Porter, noted his attendance at a meeting on January 17th convened by PTAs regarding possible school closures. It was a productive session that also addressed how they can be more involved with schools. Met with Assemblyman Morelle on January 14, 2005 and noted Mr. Morrelle’s stated continue support of the District. He attended a Parent University meeting today and announced several of their upcoming meetings.

Consideration of Resolutions:

President Porter asked for a motion to adopt Resolution No 2004-05: 457-490. Motion made by Commissioner Evans, Seconded by Commissioner Garcia. Adopted 7-0 except Resolution 2004-05: 477 which is adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Bowers dissenting.

President Porter asked for a motion to adopt Resolution No 2004-05: 491-548. Motion made by Commissioner Garcia, Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Student Rep advisory vote of yes. Adopted 7-0 except Resolution 2004-05: 537 on which Commissioner Brown abstains and is Adopted 6-0; Resolutions 2004-05: 544 and 545 adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Bowers dissenting.

Commissioner Thompson posed questions regarding Fast ForWord.

Mr. Hofer provided a brief overview on the program noting that it is a scientifically based program. It is very rigid and has been replicated across the country with tremendous gains realized for students at risk.

How were the six schools chosen?

Schools 19, 22, 35, 45, Charlotte and Douglass – identified for interest in carrying out program as designed; having necessary computer labs to accommodate the software; and focus on LEP students.

How many students from each school and how are they chosen?

60 students per school; each school selecting their own – students with disabilities, AIS students, LEP students, and students with auditory processing concerns.

What is the role of the teachers, paraprofessionals? How will administering the program effect what is currently happening in the classroom?

The teacher in the classroom is not heavily involved with program administration. It is done in the computer lab with a paraprofessional monitoring. Needs to be monitoring process because students going through number of processes to help them process because not everyone processes information at the same rate. It is intensive and takes a lot of time. Without monitoring student progress, students get off task. Requires students to move around the room, redirect students and closely monitor the process. Many of these students are reading at a level far below their grade level. This is believed to be

more important than sitting through a reading lesson that the student does not glean anything from. This program gets them back up to level faster.

What is the parent involvement here?

Parents will be notified by each principal. Ms. Fine will be available for parent information sessions, reviewing scores with them, and assisting teachers in utilizing the information. Can receive daily reports on the child's progress. Parents can be involved as much as they desire. She will provide workshops for teachers and assist with needed interventions strategies for these students. Program helps students to stretch their memory and processing time.

She asked the Superintendent if he was prepared to guarantee the resources necessary to maintain the proper protocols for this program? With uncertain resources, what guarantee can we give?

Dr. Rivera stated that one of the things that was clear in the budget process is that programs and services he recommends continued investment in will be programs and services that invest in children and produce results for them.

Dr. Cliby noted that this is not a commitment that needs to be made again next year, as the District is purchasing licensing.

Commissioners Bowers departed at 8:04 p.m.

Dr. Rivera noted several administrative appointments.

Commissioner Brown departed at 8:07 p.m.

Unfinished Business:

None

Commissioner Thompson noted that she may request that the February 10, 2005 QA meeting be held as a public hearing on the managed choice policy.

New Business:

None.

Speakers on Other Than an Agenda Item:

See List.

Adjournment:

President Porter called for a motion to adjourn the regular business meeting. Motion made by Commissioner Powell, Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 5-0 at 8:39 p.m. with Commissioners Bowers and Brown absent.